



MEDIA RELEASE

STATE OF TENNESSEE
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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GOVERNOR PROCLAIMS OCTOBER AS DISABILITY EMPLOYMENT AWARENESS MONTH

EVENTS SCHEDULED THROUGHOUT THE MONTH

NASHVILLE, Tenn. – Governor Phil Bredesen has issued a proclamation designating October as the month to generate awareness about the talents and abilities of Tennessee's citizens with disabilities.

"America Works Best When All Americans Work" is the theme of the 2003 National Disability Employment Awareness Month. The theme calls attention to an untapped personnel resource in this country – people with disabilities.

"We must make certain that every citizen of Tennessee has the opportunity for employment," said Bredesen. "Persons with disabilities can and must be important contributors to our workforce. The wealth of our state is in the businesses that employ our disabled citizens and recognize the abilities they offer to increase productivity and improve community relations."

The Division of Rehabilitation Services (DRS), within the Department of Human Services (DHS), provides services to Tennesseans with disabilities. More than 45,000 Tennesseans received Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) services during the last year. These services include diagnosis, treatment, training, counseling, job placement assistance and post-employment services. Approximately 3,500 individuals gained employment after completing VR programs during fiscal year 2002-03.

"Disability Employment Awareness Month allows us to reflect upon and consider the potential possessed by the thousands of persons with disabilities currently serving in our workforce," said DHS Commissioner Gina Lodge. "This month also reminds us of those who are ready and willing to join the workforce. We recognize and salute the skills, creativity and dedication of working people with disabilities."

Seventeen Tennessee Rehabilitation Centers located in rural communities throughout the state and the comprehensive Tennessee Rehabilitation Center at Smyrna provide additional VR services.

The Tennessee Committee for Employment of People with Disabilities and DRS staff are working with businesses and agencies across Tennessee on activities recognizing Disability Employment Awareness Month. Attached is a partial list of scheduled events.

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CITIZENS PLAZA, 15TH FLOOR
400 DEADERICK STREET
NASHVILLE, TN 37248
615.313.4700

DISABILITY EMPLOYMENT AWARENESS MONTH SCHEDULE

October 1 – 31	Official Kick-off for Activities in Metro Public Schools Contact: Jackie Page (615) 862-6492	Nashville
October 6	Career Fair Austin Peay State University Career Services Department Contact: Jennifer Ellis (931) 221-7896	Clarksville
October 13	Area Recognition Awards Dinner Speaker: U.S. Congressman John Tanner Contact: Chris Holbrook (731) 884-2600	Union City National Guard Armory
October 14	Community TRC Open House Contact: Suzanne Hilgadiack (615) 451-5826	Gallatin TN Rehabilitation Center
	Annual Awards Recognition Ceremony of Nashville Mayor's Advisory Committee Contact: Jackie Page (615) 862-6492	Nashville John F. Kennedy Center
October 15	Disability Mentoring Day Contact: Trish Farmer (615) 313-4907	Statewide Recognition
October 17	Community TRC Open House Contact: Cindy Miles (931) 648-5560	Clarksville TN Rehabilitation Center
October 23	TRC Disability Awareness Day Contact: Susan Welchance (615) 459-6811, Ext. 119	Smyrna TN Rehabilitation Center
October 28	Community TRC Open House Contact: Kara Huckaby (931) 380-2550	Columbia TN Rehabilitation Center
October 31	Community TRC Open House Contact: Sandra Shepherd (931) 526-4721	Cookeville TN Rehabilitation Center
	Area Recognition Awards Luncheon Contact: Alma Ruth Michael (731) 286-8313	Dyersburg TN Rehabilitation Center

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